

Chapter 11 – IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

The adoption of this Plan serves as a continuous growth management guide for Aberdeen. The Plan serves as the framework around which future land use decisions are based. Smart Growth principles, House Bill 1141, the Aberdeen Development Code, and subdivision and design requirements, are intended to direct the overall implementation of the Plan. Smart Growth principles include revitalizing existing communities, producing efficient compact forms of development, facilitating mixtures of community-based land uses, accommodating infill and redevelopment, encouraging centrally located and pedestrian accessible transportation, and providing a wide range of housing types.

IMPLEMENTATION AUTHORITY

Planning is a recognized governmental process, operating under the general objectives established by Article 66B. The City's Planning Commission, as an advisory committee to the Mayor and the City Council, is charged with the duties of developing and maintaining the Comprehensive Plan, administering the legal tools at its disposal for implementing the Plan, and carrying on other activities dealing with development in the City.

SMART GROWTH

In seeking the necessary growth balance within the community, local government officials have articulated their desire to prevent the overloading of public services and infrastructure that serve the existing citizens, businesses, and institutions of Aberdeen. In addressing Smart Growth related concerns found throughout the State, local officials and citizens have recognized that rapid growth and unstructured development do not necessarily reduce the local tax burden to pay for the additional services in demand. As a result, Aberdeen seeks creative growth management techniques to ensure that future growth is planned and adequate public facilities are provided for when development occurs.

DEVELOPMENT CODE

When the Plan has been adopted, zoning becomes the principle means available for giving it legal effect. The functions of zoning are to control the use of land and buildings and to regulate the density of development, in order to guide future land use patterns toward the goals outlined in the Plan. The description of Aberdeen's zoning districts is found in Chapter 2- Land Use Element.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Aberdeen public officials, private landowners, and developers must have a clear understanding of the fiscal responsibilities (both public and private) and desired community benefits before engaging in a development project. This process must be structured so that the involved parties can fully explore planning issues, infrastructure needs, and site opportunities at the pre-planning level. These meetings should be conducted prior to submission of the preliminary subdivision plan or site development plan.

In order to create specific development projects which foster the land use planning goals of Aberdeen, certain land use objectives and project site design principles must be included in any development: (1) water and sewer planning; (2) internal and external land use relationships; (3) identifying building locations and grouping; (4) preserving open space and creating recreational opportunities; (5) establishing access and circulation systems; and (6) addressing Smart Growth principles. When viewed in its entirety, the City's Comprehensive Plan, facilities master plan, regulatory ordinances, development standards, and review processes must seek to optimize these objectives and principles.

CAPITAL IMPACTS

For some public infrastructure, standards have been established that define capacity. For example, State rated capacity for our classrooms, acceptable levels of traffic congestion, and average and maximum water or wastewater flows can be used to define the capabilities and limitations of schools, roads, and treatment facilities. If new development generates a greater impact than can be accommodated by existing infrastructure, it further degrades the level of service of local roads, and/or creates average daily water demands that exceed the wastewater treatment plant's design capacity. New or enlarged infrastructure is needed. In most cases, the City could continue to function without investing in new infrastructure, but the reduction in level of service would be evidenced by overcrowded schools and roads and periodic breakdowns of the wastewater treatment plant. For other public infrastructure, defining capacity is more difficult. At some point, as the demand for and on services increases, the facilities that house or supply these services become inadequate, and the level of service declines. The exact point at which this happens is often difficult to pin down.

The City should consider the adoption of impact fees that are dedicated to capital expenses, not the cost of operations and maintenance (which is generally supported by taxes or user fees). In turn, the impact fee must be reasonable. The "rational nexus test" has evolved as the most common standard for establishing whether impact fees are reasonable. The test requires that: (1) fees charged are correlated with needs attributable to the new development; (2) the level of fees relates to the benefits that will accrue to the development; (3) the funded capital improvements are established through coherent plans or impact assessment methods; and (4) collection and expenditure of impact fees must be tracked separately from other municipal revenues and expenditures. To be legally acceptable, approaches to setting impact fees must conform to the

rational nexus test. To be useful, an approach must also reflect the current state-of-the-art in defining capacity standards and apportioning costs. Impact fee methodologies involve assumptions about the levels of demand that can be supported by existing facilities, beneficiaries of the new infrastructure, and degrees of benefit to each effected party. These assumptions are easily supported if they are based on detailed analysis, but often such analysis is not available.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The City adopts a Capital Improvement Program as part of the annual budget process. To derive the maximum benefits from public funds, it is important that adequate public improvements be planned and timed so they are constructed in the proper sequence to meet Smart Growth requirements.

The Capital Improvement Program establishes a revolving five-year period to review and prioritize public improvement projects. Projects scheduled for early implementation are detailed so that proper budgeting and financing can be arranged. The program is reviewed annually and at the same time projected ahead another year. This assures that public projects will be completed where and when needed, and within the City's budget. It is essential that this program be coordinated with the Plan.

SUMMARY

Aberdeen, through the adoption of the Plan will concentrate development in a manner that ensures a safe, attractive, and economically viable land use pattern that sustains a balance between the City's current footprint and the inevitable growth that will occur, especially that related to the BRAC initiatives at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

